

## Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /028 W  
----- 071297

R 240840Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9021

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, KS

SUBJECT: REACTION TO ANTI-SLANDER BILL

REF: (A) SEOUL 1876 (B) SEOUL 1930

SUMMARY: PRESS REACTION TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ANTI-SLANDER AMENDMENT HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE AND FOR MOST PART HIGHLY CRITICAL OF GOVERNMENT ACTION. CRITICISM HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY FOCUSED ON "BLITZKRIEG" PASSAGE OF BILL AND BREAKDOWN OF GOVERNMENT/OPPOSITION DIALOGUE. EMBASSY CONTACTS SO FAR NOT INHIBITED IN EXPRESSING VIEWS, BUT HAVE INDICATED AWARENESS OF POTENTIAL PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

1. MOST DIRECT ATTACK ON BILL CAME IN MARCH 19 TONGA ILBO WHICH CALLED FOR "IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF BILL." TONGA ARGUES THAT AMENDMENT GOES AGAINST MAJOR AND NECESSARY ROK POLICY OF INTERNATIONALISM AND THAT ATTEMPTS TO ENHANCE NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND MORALITY BY SUPPRESSING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IS ACT OF "THE UNEDUCATED." CHOSUN ILBO CONDEMNED RECKLESS REMARKS ABROAD, BUT DENIED THAT THIS IS MATTER WHICH CAN BE REGULATED BY LAW. OTHER PAPERS, INCLUDING PROVINCIAL PRESS, WERE ALSO CRITICAL OF  
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BILL. EVEN PRO-GOVERNMENT KYONGHYANG SINMUN ALTHOUGH

AGREEING WITH OBJECTIVE OF PROTECTING NATIONAL SAFETY  
AND PRESTIGE, EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT BASIC  
HUMAN RIGHTS MIGHT BE VIOLATED.

2. PRESS COMMENT ESPECIALLY CRITICAL OF  
GOVERNMENT CONDUCT IN FORCING AMENDMENT THROUGH  
ASSEMBLY WITHOUT DEBATE AND WITHOUT PRESENCE OPPOSITION  
ASSEMBLYMEN. TONGA ILBO CONTRASTED UNILATERAL ACT  
BY GOVERNMENT WITH ITS STATED POLICY OF WORKING  
FOR POLITICAL DIALOGUE WITHIN ASSEMBLY. PRESS GENERALLY  
PREDICTED THAT RESULT OF GOVERNMENT CONDUCT IN  
ASSEMBLY WOULD BE TO FORCE POLITICAL CONFRONTATION  
OUTSIDE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM. TONGA ILBO WRITES  
THAT NDP AND NCRD PLANNING TO RESUME ANTI-GOVERNMENT  
ACTIVITIES, WITH AMENDMENT AS FOCAL POINT.

3. SEVERAL PAPERS DID CRITICIZE OPPOSITION FOR  
BLOCKING ROSTRUM AND CALLED ON BOTH SIDES TO  
CONDUCT SINCERE DIALOGUE IN DEMOCRATIC TRADITION.

4. EMBASSY CONTACTS HAVE SO FAR STATED THAT THEY  
DO NOT PLAN TO RESTRICT THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH  
FOREIGNERS DUE TO ANTI-SLANDER BILL. HOWEVER, MOST  
CRITICS OF GOVT HAVE INDICATED LOW-KEY CONCERN WITH POSSIBILITY  
THAT AMENDMENT COULD BE USED AGAINST THEM.

5. ROKG MAY GIVE CLEARER SIGNALS AS TO INTENDED  
TARGETS OF BILL AFTER IT IS OFFICIALLY PROMULGATED  
AND GOES INTO EFFECT. (BILL WILL AUTOMATICALLY GO  
INTO EFFECT 15 DAYS AFTER PASSAGE IF NOT  
PROMULGATED OR RETURNED TO ASSEMBLY BY PRESIDENT.)  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** DEFAMATION, PRESS COMMENTS, AMENDMENTS, LEGISLATIVE BILLS, INFORMATION CONTROL, PUBLIC ATTITUDES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 24 MAR 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** RowellE0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
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**Film Number:** D750102-0025  
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